

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARA-10

EA-07 NEA-10 DHA-02 MCT-01 /107 W

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O 282315Z JUL 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4663

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2405

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, WA

SUBJ: NAMIBIA: AHTISAARI MEETS FOR FIRST TIME WITH CONTACT GROUP

REF: USUN 2330

SUMMARY: MEETING FOR FIRST TIME WITH FULL CONTACT GROUP

JULY 27, UNITED NATIONS COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA MARTTI

AHTISAARI OUTLINED LIMITED ROLE HE BELIEVED HE COULD PLAY

AT THIS STAGE IN ASSISTING GROUP AND GAVE SOME STRONG ADVICE

ON SOUTH AFRICAN TROOP WITHDRAWALS, LARGELY RECAPPING

WHAT HE HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR MCHENRY EARLIER (SEPTTEL).

END SUMMARY.

1. AHTISAARI TOLD GROUP THAT HE HAD RETURNED TO NEW YORK

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FROM FINLAND JULY 26 AT SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S

URGENT SUMMONS. AS YET, HE HAD NOT HAD OPPORTUNITY TO

DISCUSS WITH COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA, SECRETARY GENERAL OR OTHER

POLICY-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS OFFICIALS THE ROLE HE WAS

EXPECTED TO PLAY IN ASSISTING GROUP. ALL HE HAD TO DRAW ON

FOR GUIDANCE ON HIS ROLE WAS MEMORANDUM OF WALDHEIM'S JULY 21

CONVERSATION WITH FIVE (REFTEL) IN WHICH SECRETARY

GENERAL OFFERED AHTISAARI'S SERVICES AS SOURCE OF INFORMATION, WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN LARGELY PASSIVE, REACTIVE. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, AHTISAARI SAID HE WOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH FIVE BUT ON UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ATTRIBUTION OF HIS PERSONAL VIEWS.

2. AHTISAARI SAID HE WAS STRONGLY OF OPINION THAT, IN THEIR TALKS THUS FAR WITH SOUTH AFRICA, FIVE HAD GIVEN TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO PRINCIPLE OF FREE ELECTIONS AND NOT ENOUGH ATTENTION TO CREATING CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE FOR HOLDING ELECTIONS. NOTHING SAID OR DONE THUS FAR GAVE SWAPO ASSURANCE IT NEEDED TO RISK TAKING PART IN POLITICAL PROCESS. AS LONG AS SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION AND MILITARY AND PARA-MILITARY FORCES REMAINED IN NAMIBIA, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, WHAT HAVE FIVE GAINED FROM SWAPO'S STANDPOINT? WHILE THEY REMAINED, SWAPO WOULD WANT ITS OWN ARMED FORCES IN TERRITORY AS GUARANTEE OF ITS FREEDOM OF ACTION IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. PERHAPS ONLY WAY TO PERSUADE SWAPO TO LAY DOWN ARMS, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO BRING IN UN TROOPS. EVEN UN "CIVIL" PRESENCE WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE GUARANTEES HE THOUGHT SWAPO LEGITIMATELY SOUGHT.

3. AHTISAARI ALSO REPORTED "GENERAL FEELING" THAT FIVE WERE PUSHING INITIATIVE TOO FAST. HE SAID IT
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WAS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT SWAPO AND UN TO REACT IN MATTER OF WEEKS TO PROPOSALS WITH TANGLED HISTORICAL AND LEGAL ANTECEDENTS, AND HE HOPED FIVE WOULD TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

4. IN CONCLUSION, AHTISAARI SAID THAT, DESPITE LIMITATIONS OF HIS "MANDATE", HE PERSONALLY WELCOMED ALL EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO NAMIBIAN PROBLEM AND WOULD HELP AS BEST HE COULD. MOREOVER, HE COULD REPORT THAT AFRICAN LEADERS, INCLUDING FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS, HAD SPOKEN POSITIVELY ABOUT GROUP OF FIVE INITIATIVE DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM AT RECENT LIBREVILLE OAU SUMMIT.

5. COMMENT: THERE ARE OBVIOUS CONSTRAINTS ON DEGREE OF AHTISAARI'S USEFULNESS TO FIVE, BUT WE THINK FRUITFUL, IF DISCREET, COOPERATION IS POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY AFTER WALDHEIM HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF HIM PRIVATELY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, ELECTIONS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 USUN NEW YORK 2330
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1898631
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA: AHTISAARI MEETS FOR FIRST TIME WITH CONTACT GROUP
TAGS: PDEV, WA, UN, (AHTISAARI, MARTTI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/22c4676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009